

U.S. Serial No.: 10/708,919  
File: March 31, 2004  
Group Art Unit: 2918  
Examiner: David C. Comstock  
Atty. Docket No: 101896-241 (DEP-5293)

### AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0017]:

[0017.1] FIG. 1E is an exploded view of another embodiment of an adjustable-angle spinal fixation device having a spinal fixation plate with a male connecting feature and a spinal rod with a female connecting feature for mating to the male connecting feature;

Please replace paragraph [0029] with the following amended paragraph:

[0029] The first and second elongate members 12a, 12b can each have any shape or size, and each elongate member 12a, 12b can vary in diameter relative to one another. The elongate members 12a, 12b can also vary in length depending on the intended use. In the illustrated embodiment, the first and second elongate members 12a, 12b are substantially cylindrical spinal rods, each having a terminal end 13, 15 that is adapted to mate to a spinal anchor, such as a hook, screw, bolt, plate, etc. The opposed terminal end 14, 16 of each elongate member 12a, 12b includes the connecting feature 20a, 20b formed thereon and mated to one another.

Please replace paragraph [0029.1] with the following amended paragraph:

[0029.1] While the terminal ends 13, 15 of the elongate members 12a, 12b shown in FIGS. 1A-1B extend along the axis of the elongate members 12a, 12b, the terminal ends 13, 15 can extend at an angle relative to the elongate members 12a, 12b. For example, as shown in FIG. 1E, the terminal end 13' of one of the elongate members, e.g., the first elongate member 12a', can extend at a 90° angle relative to the longitudinal axis of the second elongate member 12b, as shown in FIG. 1E. The opposed terminal end 14, 16 of each elongate member 12a, 12b includes the connecting feature 20a, 20b formed thereon and mated to one another. In other embodiments, one or both of the elongate members can be in the form of a spinal fixation plate. For example, as shown in FIG. 1E, the second elongate member 12b is in the form of a spinal fixation plate 12b', rather than a spinal rod.

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Please replace paragraph [0030] with the following amended paragraph:

[0030] Continuing to refer to FIGS. 1A-1B, Each connecting feature 20a, 20b can have a variety of configurations, but they should be adapted to allow for angular adjustability of the first and second elongate members 12a, 12b relative to one another. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 1A-1B, the connecting feature 20a on the first elongate member 12a is in the form of a female connector, and the connecting feature 20b on the second elongate member 12 is in the form of a male connector. The terminal ends 14, 16 of the elongate members 12a, 12b can mate to the connectors 20a, 20b at any location, but in an exemplary embodiment the elongate members 12a, 12b are positioned such that the connectors 20a, 20b do not interfere with the patient's spinal anatomy.

Please replace paragraph [0037] with the following amended paragraph:

[0037] In use, the ~~locking mechanism~~ fastening element 27 can be partially threaded into the bore 28c formed in the male connector 20b to allow the first and second elongate members 12a, 12b to rotate relative to one another. Although the elongate members 12a, 12b can be adapted for multi-axial rotation, in the illustrated embodiment the elongate members 12a, 12b rotate along a single plane. Each elongate member 12a, 12b may be configured to rotate such that a complementary angle  $\alpha$  between the elongate members 12a, 12b, as shown in FIG. 1B, can range from about 0° to 135° in each direction from a coaxial position, and more preferably from about 60° to 135° in each direction from a coaxial position. Once the elongate members 12a, 12b are in a desired position relative to one another, which is typically as a result of attaching the terminal ends 13, 15 of the elongate members 12a, 12b to an anchoring device, the fastening element 27 can be fully threaded into the bore 28c in the male connector 20b to cause the male connector 20b to engage the mating element 29, thereby preventing rotation of the second elongate member 12b relative to the first elongate member 12a.